



# U.S. COAST GUARD



## Homeland Security

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#### JUNIOR OFFICER FIRST TOUR ASSIGNMENT POLICY

Over the course of the last six months, we've had a highly diverse team examine our first tour assignment policy for junior officers. This was driven by the fact that although the officer corps has grown, this growth has largely been in maritime mission areas other than sea duty. In addition, efficiencies have reduced the number of opportunities for junior officers to be assigned afloat.

As a result of this confluence of events, the policy of assigning all Coast Guard Academy graduates to sea duty for their first tour assignment must change. The vast majority of Academy graduates (75% or more) will still go to sea. All others will be assigned to major operational units for their first assignment, with a small number attending flight school directly out of the Academy. The first class to be affected by this change of policy will be the graduating class of 2004.

An appropriate number of OCS and DCO officers will still be assigned to sea duty for their first tour consistent with historical norms and the needs of the service. We will endeavor to assign all other OCS graduates to operational units for their first tour. First tour assignments for OCS graduates to Headquarters, Area and District administrative duties will only be the exception . . . not the rule. Where this must occur, those officers will be afforded every opportunity to be assigned to an operational unit within 18 to 24 months. DCO's are targeted to meet specific first-tour assignment needs, some of which are focused on staff support like direct commission lawyers.

This policy change is guided by several principles: preserve the Coast Guard's inherent characteristics as a military, maritime, multi-mission service; provide the best balance of assignment opportunities to develop maritime operational and leadership competencies; and provide optimum officer acculturation for officers from each accession source.

I firmly believe this revision to our first tour assignment policy for junior officers will meet the ongoing needs of the Coast Guard and is the best interest of all of our junior officers.

Regards,

*RADM Kenneth T. Venuto*  
Ken Venuto

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